To the Convivial Grave And Back

John Fitch and the Failure of Pre-Industrial Culture, 1785-1792*

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> . . . but all combined, cannot be put in competition with the distresses I have experienced in my fealings in raiseing money from my best friends. could money have been extracted from my limbs, amputations would have often taken place, provided the disjointed part could have been readily joined, rather than to make the demands which I have.[1]
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> Could I have recalled my life back for four years, I would gladly have offered my neck to the common executioner[.][2]
>
> . . . for I would rather become a willing sacrifice to the Faggot then to wear out the evening of my days in wretched existence to the Eternal Dishonour of the first acts of our Empire[.][3]

"Could money have been extracted from my limbs," "I would have offered my neck to the common executioner," and "I would rather have become a sacrifice to the Faggot" all express John Fitch's preference for the violent dissolution of his self over his "wretched existence" as inventor of the steamboat. Fitch imagined himself as preferring dismemberment, torture, or execution to the poverty, indebtedness, public insult, and betrayal that plagued his work on steamboats. In this paper, I will argue that Fitch's images of self-sacrifice represent both a failure of pre-industrial culture and an experiment with an alternative to pre-industrial culture. Cultural failure can be defined as a breakdown in the reproduction of the symbolic code through which a group organizes its social practices. As such, cultural failure can involve either the incapacity of a group to socialize new members into an established symbolic code or the inability of socialized individuals to identify with or employ an established code in their daily lives. In the case of Fitch, I will argue that his participation in the speculative steamboat enterprise created such distressed conditions for him that he could not identify himself with pre-industrial values of "independence," "honor," "respectability," and "community." Instead, he experimented with images in which he was identified with various forms of torment and torture, eventually formulating a language of self-identification that was distinct from pre-industrial culture. Fitch's experience of the failure of pre-industrial culture and experiments with alternative symbolisms were as isolated as the experience of a highly public man can be. However, Fitch's experience foreshadows the wider

experience of pre-industrial cultural failure that resulted in the development of rioting fire companies, the workingmen's movement, and burlesque parade traditions during the 1820's and 1830's. Fitch is thus important both as an early example and as a model for the impending failure of pre-industrial culture among Philadelphia working people as a whole.

In the first part of this paper, I examine the social organization and symbolic processes of pre-industrial culture and John Fitch's enthusiastic participation in pre-industrial practices as an adult. The second part examines Fitch's representation of himself and his work during the first two years of the steamboat project, arguing that Fitch remained within a pre-industrial idiom even though his mode of self-representation changed from a measured deference to a discourse in which he compares his burdens to captivity, torture, and suicide. The third part examines Fitch's representation of himself and his work between 1788 and 1792, focusing on the ways in which Fitch represented himself as choosing captivity, execution, and other states of mortification over his experiences with steamboats. I will argue that these images removed Fitch's self-representation from both the symbolism and social mechanisms of pre-industrial culture, and that, as a result, Fitch was both indicating his incapacity to locate himself within the bounds of pre-industrial culture and seeking a different mode of self-representation.

1. Fitch as a bearer of pre-industrial culture

In the pre-industrial culture of post-revolutionary Philadelphia working people, cultural practices were organized as "processes of recognition." Processes of recognition can be defined as activities that alternated betweeen performances seeking collective acknowledgement of individual distinction and collective judgments that affirmed group solidarity while approving or disapproving individual performance. In pre-industrial culture, informal and formal activities were organized as situations of performance where participants competed before a "company" of their co-workers, friends, family, or fellows, seeking recognition for the distinctiveness of their performance before the group. In informal activities such as tavern debate, workplace drinking,

spontaneous contests, and home holiday celebrations, participants both drew on their tacit knowledge of norms and created ad hoc rules to guide their performances and their judgments concerning the performances of others. When a "company" applauded or cheered a participant's overcoming of opponents, surpassing of pre-determined goals, or meeting accepted standards of excellence, it simultaneously recognized the performer's distinctiveness and his obedience to the shared norms of the group. Conversely, when a company jeered or ridiculed those who did not meet standards, suffered defeat at the hands of opponents, cheated, or refused to pay bets, it was rejecting a failure of performance that was also a failure to conform to group norms. In both cases, companies affirmed collective solidarity as they judged performances.[4]

Working people also participated in a wide variety of formally organized cultural activities, including fire companies, militia companies, debating societies, and craft processions. The difference between formal and informal cultural activities was that participants explicitly committed themselves to a set of formal rules when they joined the "companies" within which formal cultural activities occurred. The rules of formal cultural activities defined both the obligations of members to the group and the opportunities of individuals to perform the distinctive activities around which the group was organized. In the case of the fire companies, rules concerning attendance at meetings, payment of fines for non-attendance, the care of fire equipment, use of the fire apparatus, authority at a fire defined obligations in such a way that those members who fulfilled their obligations (usually this meant paying fines) received ample opportunity to display their skill, courage, judgment, and public spiritedness before both the company and the public at fires. Each company had rules or customs mandating that the first man to reach the fire house after a fire alarm had command of the apparatus on the way to the fire and that command of the apparatus at the fire devolved on whoever had control of the nozzle that sprayed the water. Hence, each member of the company would receive many opportunities to control the apparatus and perform before the company and the public. However, when individuals were performing and seeking recognition for themselves, they were doing so as

members of a fire company engaged in the distinct activity of fire companies and they were judged as members of the group.[5]

The cultural practices of pre-industrial working people also involved a process of symbolic displacement, a process a symbol of vulnerability was introduced and then replaced with a symbol of cohesive individuality. When working people entered into cultural activity, they were often burdened by "cares," "troubles," and "ills" that were experienced as threats to the integrity of their personality. Popular songs and poetry described "ills" as "the ills that discompose the mind," analogized "troubles" with drowning in storms, being decapitated in battle, and being eaten by sharks, and characterized "care" as "soul-destroying." In pre-industrial cultural encounters, this sense of being threatened was represented or symbolized by the competitors, opponents, enemies, or potential for humiliation confronted by individuals in the course of their efforts to seek recognition. This is easy to see in cases of firefighting, cockfighting, bear-baiting, and bull-baiting where the representation of a threat to individuality is graphic, but any cultural activity organized as a process of recognition involved the possibility that a participant could be embarrassed, humiliated, or routed by an opponent. However, if competing to demonstrate mechanical skill, drinking ability, handsomeness, or debating skill exposed individuals to symbolic threats, these activities also created opportunities for individuals to overcome competitors and be recognized for their skills, abilities, and distinctive characteristics. Triumph within pre-industrial cultural activity replaced the opponent and the symbolic threat symbolized by the opponent with the cheers, smiles, huzzahs, praise, and congratulations of the company. Rather than being symbolically threatened with the violation of physical or psychological integrity, the performer experiences his distinctive individuality reflected back to him in the approval of the company. In being praised for being the "fastest eater," "most learned," "the most skilled craftsmen," owner of the winning cock, a public-spirited fireman, or a good patriot, the victorious participant experiences his individuality as symbolized by the actions of the group.[6]

John Fitch was socialized into pre-industrial cultural practices as a youth and participated in such practices throughout his stay in Philadelphia and beyond. There is no information on how

Fitch was socialized into such practices, but there is a wealth of evidence in the materials from Fitch's adult life indicating that he had been introduced to pre-industrial cultural practices during his childhood. In his autobiography, for instance, Fitch reports a striking incident of misfired pre-industrial cultural exchange between his older brother and the Governor of Connecticut. Joseph Fitch was a member of a road-repairing party that offered Governor Wolcott a dram of rum as he passed by with the expectation that Wolcott would pay liberally for the favor. Like Christmas mumming, this was a practice by which the lower orders customarily were able to ritually extort a kind of tribute from the better-off. However, when Wolcott mocked the custom by only contributing one copper, Joseph Fitch made "visible commemoration" of the event by punching a hole through the copper and nailing the copper to a post with a scarlet rag to signify that it was the governor who was so "mean." In customs like this, the higher orders recognized the dignity, sacrifice, and public service of the lower orders by making a contribution and sharing a drink with their "inferiors." In mocking the custom, Wolcott was insulting the road party by treating them as servants rather than independent men, thus inspiring Joseph Fitch to publicly repesent Wolcott as a "mean" and "despicable" man, unworthy of social respect. In telling the story, John Fitch was indicating his long familiarity with the customs like sharing drams that were part of the routine of workshops, visits to other workshops, visits to the homes of friends and acquaintances, tavern socializing, and other public encounters like those involving work parties. He was also communicating his knowledge of the niceties of exchange between the higher orders and the lower orders and how those exchanges could succeed or fail[7]

After Fitch became an employer in his own right, he perpetuated a variety of pre-industrial customs, including the purchasing of alcohol for workmen and customers, competitive rituals within the workshop, and participation in popular celebrations. According to one of his account books, Fitch considered a daily allowance of 4 1/2 pence for liquor to be part of the wage for his journeymen and recorded these payments as "finding" his journeymen in liquor. This alcohol would have been consumed during customary breaks in which masters, journeymen, and apprentices purchased bread, cheese, and sweets, sang songs, engaged in petty gambling, and held

political discussions. Such breaks were the occasion for a wide variety of informal performances and competitions through which working people could seek recognition for their luck, singing ability, story-telling, practical joking, or craftsmanship. In the case of Fitch's journeymen, participation in such cultural activities would have allowed them to attempt to overcome the "cares" and "troubles" deriving from Fitch's chronic inability to pay them and experience themselves as distinct, independent, and valuable. Given that Fitch boarded at a tavern and reported himself as debating with dockside visitors while "mildly glad in liquor," there is no reason to believe that Fitch did not also engage in the competitive leisure of the pre-industrial workplace when he was at the workshop and the docks. As the master of the workshop, Fitch would have regularly sought recognition for his own distinctive characteristics as the steamboat inventor and a versatile craftsman, his generosity in meeting his customary obligations, and his skill at various leisure games.[8]

Based on this evidence, it appears that Fitch entered upon the steamboat project as a knowing participant in pre-industrial culture, someone who was socialized into pre-industrial practices and values, recognized his responsibilities in the arranging workplace cultural activities, and participated in those cultural activities himself. As Fitch began work on the steamboat, he was a bearer of pre-industrial culture both in the sense that he "bore" the aspirations, values, and practical sense of pre-industrial culture within himself and in the sense that he was carrying pre-industrial culture forward into his work on the steamboat.

2. From Measured Deference to the Convivial Grave, 1785-1787

For the first two years of the steamboat project, Fitch was able to represent himself in a manner that was consistent with his participation in pre-industrial cultural practices. In his initial letters to legislative bodies and potential backers, Fitch promoted his designs by using a language of deference to convince prominent men to support him. After Fitch began work on the steamboat, the rhetoric of deference was superceded by a rhetoric organized around oppositions between the projected benefits of steamboats and the real burdens of steamboat building. In both

cases however, Fitch's positions were enunciated through formulations that were consistent with pre-industrial culture in that Fitch identified himself with pre-industrial values of masculine independence articulated in terms of collective obligations.

In April 1785, Fitch was living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and waiting to hear from Congress about the disposition of lands that he had surveyed for his land-jobbing company in Ohio. Fitch thought of the possibility of powering water vehicles by steam while walking with a friend and moved quickly to build a miniature model of a steamboat, develop plans for a larger model, and engage in fund-raising. In August, Fitch journeyed to New York to petition Congress to subscribe to 4,000 of his maps as a way to encourage his effort to build a steamboat. Failing to find encouragement there and extremely disappointed with the "ignorant boys" in Congress, Fitch presented his plans to the Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. In October, Fitch set off on a trip to Kentucky to solicit support there, but took detours to promote his scheme with George Washington and ex-governor Thomas Johnson of Maryland before journeying to Richmond to petition the Virginia legislature for assistance.[9]

During 1785 and early 1786, Fitch's letters were characterized by a measured form of address that was proper for a man seeking patronage from his social superiors. In a petition to the legislature of Maryland, for instance, Fitch addresses the legislature as a supplicant:

> The Subscriber humbly begs leave to inform this Honourable Legislature that he has proposed a Machine for promoting Navigation which has been approved by the Honourable A[s]semblies of Virginia and Pennsylvania and by many men of Science who have examined the same and certified their Approbation.[10]

Here, Fitch's deferential language creates the impression that granting the petition would create an exchange between the legislature and other elites that only indirectly involved Fitch himself. Fitch first acknowledges his social inferiority by giving up the ready address that he might adopt with his friends and equals and humbly begging leave to speak. Likewise, assuming that the legislature might not consider him to be qualified to comment on his invention, Fitch

relies only on the testimony of other social elites to create an impression of the projected steamboat's merits. In this sense, Fitch's steamboat plan would deserve the Maryland legislature's support because individuals who were the equals of the legislators--"men of science" and Assemblies in Pennsylvania and Virginia--gave their approval. If the Maryland legislature did wish to support the plan, Fitch proposes that they allow Andrew Ellicott, Esq. to draw money out of the Maryland treasury and would have practical control of the money instead of Fitch. Thus, the Maryland legislature would be engaged in a transaction with Ellicott rather than Fitch.[11]

Although Fitch's other letters and petitions claim greater accomplishments for himself and benefits from the steamboat, they are all designed to create a deferential impression. For instance, Fitch's initial petition to the congressional committee acknowledges inferiority by stating a reluctance to speak: "[i]t was with the greatest Diffidence tho with the advice of several Gentlemen of Science [that] I have at last presumed to lay at your feet an Attempt to a[s]sist the inland Navigation of the United States . . . ." A similar reluctance to claim much for his ideas appears in Firch's letter to the Philosophical Socety where Fitch obliquely minimizes his role in formulating his own ideas: " . . . having a Greater turn than genius for effecting new and Valuable purposes, I have happened on one which appears to me may be made useful." When Fitch does claim benefits for the steamboat, as he does when he informs the Spanish Ambassador that "could said Engine be put into practice, it would be of Infinite utility to his most Catholick Majesties unlimited dominions," he goes on to emphasize his subservience: "this is to inform your Excellency, that I wish to serve his Most Catholick Majesty with my life and best services, and shall think myself happy when I am faithfully promoting his interest . . . ."[12]

This measured deference gave way after the experiments of 1786. Early in the year, Fitch sought to put his efforts on a firm financial footing by organizing a company of investors who purchased fifty shares in the company for twenty dollars apiece. Despite becoming involved in a dispute with Arthur Donaldson over his (Fitch's) priority of invention, Fitch chose Henry Voight as his chief engineer and, with Voight, embarked on experiments with a small skiff to test various concepts of steam propulsion. The initial experiments with "a screw of paddles, an endless chain,

and other modes" all failed and the inventors were "jeered and scoffed at" by spectators. However, after a night of heavy drinking, Fitch hit upon the idea of applying steam power to a system of cranks and paddles for propelling a boat. The experimental success of this system was the first evidence of the steamboat's potential and encouraged Fitch to seek new financing for building a larger boat. At the [13]

However, after the experiment with the skiff boat Fitch's deferential gestures were now overlaid with contrasting images of the benefits of the steamboat project and burdens of steamboat building. In a September letter to Thomas Mifflin, President of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Fitch introduces himself by pairing an expression of his own burden with a deferential gesture: "Nothing gives me such extream pain as to occasion unnece[s]sary Trouble, but i am persuaded the Honourable Mr. Mifflin will pardon me for this intrusion." Though deferentially acknowledging the generosity with which he expects that Mifflin will greet this "unnecessary trouble," Fitch poses his own suffering at bringing his problems to Mifflin as at least equal to Mifflin's trouble. He then reinforces the impression of his burdens by treating the idea for the steamboat itself as a burden: "Permit me Sir to inform you that the subscriber was so unfortunate . . . as to have an accidental thought that the force of Steam could be applied to many useful purposes, and amongst the rest to propel Vessels forward thro the Water."[14]

Fitch also makes his own claims for the prospective performance and benefits of the steamboat. His asserts that the boat will travel "six, seven, or eight miles per hour and that steam-powered vessels would "not only make the Mississippi "as navigable as a Tide River," but "would make our Vast Territory on those waters an inconceivable fund for the Treasury of the United States." He then prepares his audience for his next claims by acknowledging the difficulty of accepting them. "And should I say that we could always outrun any of the Piratical cruisers on the Costes of Barbary, so as to give them proper chaztizement perhaps I should not be thought more extravagant than I have already been."[15] In acknowledging the possible "extravagance" of all his claims, Fitch is acknowledging the force of credulous public opinion on both Mifflin and himself. Not only had spectators "jeered and scoffed" at the initial skiff experiments, but Fitch

had apparently met with hostility from both the prominent men who pointedly refused to subscribe money to the steamboat and the ordinary people who derided Fitch along the dock, in the workshops, and in the taverns and grog shops. As he stated later in the year, Fitch had "set [himself] up as a mark of derision, & suffered every insult that the disdain & contempt which the populace have for projectors could inflict . . . ." [16]

To acknowledge the possible extravagance of his claims implies that Fitch admits that Mifflin himself might have heard others scoff at Fitch's boasts. What authorizes Fitch to make such a severe departure from his former deference and strain the credulity of his audience is the burden of financing further work on the steamboat. Work on the skiff had already exhausted the original contributions to the Steamboat Company and Fitch needed to raise more money to build the larger steam engine now needed. However, Fitch did not want to return to the Steamboat Company for money: "[a]nd to request those gentlemen who have subscribed so generiously to give more would hurt my feelings too much." Most of the contributors to the Steamboat Company were friends of Fitch, men who contributed to the project out of public spiritedness and a belief in Fitch rather than a confidence in ultimate success. To go back to them and ask for more money would be making Fitch dependent on their patronage in a way that he had not been before. Thus, in seeking financing from the legislature, Fitch was attempting to maintain a practical independence and he felt it necessary to speak on his own behalf: "I seem now for the want of money to be under the necessity of giving my opinion, and resquing my reputation on the succefs of the Scheem[.]" Now that Fitch's practical independence was endangered by the "embarrassments" of the steamboat project, he felt compelled to speak in his own behalf outside the protection of his patrons.[17]

Given the practical difficulties of the skiff experiments, the financial problems, the dispute with Donaldson, and adverse public opinion, it is little wonder that Fitch treats the steamboat project as a burden. Indeed, he closes the letter to Mifflin by comparing the steamboat project unfavorably with his one real loss of independence, his captivity at the hands of Indians during the Revolution.

> "I am thus obliged in some measure to make myself liable for the succefs of the Scheme for the Pitiful sum of L150; which the original unfortunate thought has given me more trouble than my Savage Captivity." Yet I cannot indure since it is no nearly compleated to give over the persuit[.] I ask the subscription only till I can get my Boot compleated, when I will return the money again."[18]

Other letters from late 1786 reinforce the connection between the burdens of steamboat building and Fitch's enunciation of of his own claims for the benefits of the steamboat. In a letter to the Committee of the Assembly, Fitch employs a language of deference to apologize for introducing his claims: "with the greatest diffidence, I beg leave to addrefs you on a subject of the first consequence both to myself & Country." Nevertheless, Fitch forthrightly asserts that the difficulties of financing make it necessary for him to come forward to seek aid. In his letter to a committee of the assembly, Fitch refers to "the embarrassments and difficulties which I labour under" before claiming that he had invented "the greatest improvement on inland Navigation" since the first Oars and that the steamboat will enrich "America at least three times as much as all the vast Territory N.W. of the Ohio . . . A letter to the assembly as a whole prefaces the same claims by stressing both the "difficulties that I have surmounted and the insults he receives from the public."[19]

A difference between the letters to the Assembly and Fitch's letter to Mifflin was that the letters to the assembly also refer to the potential negative consequences of the legislature's refusal. In one letter, Fitch rhetorically asks "what would be said of us in other countries" if the governing bodies "would not give him a single sous" even though he had proposed a plan that would "inrich America and "make the Northwest Territory "four times as valuable" as at present. His answer was that the legislature should protect the nation from such shame: "May Heaven forbid that such a stigma should be placed to the account of the Country of my birth." In another letter, Fitch adds that turning him down would deter other inventors: "unless there is proper encouragement for these things, men will sooner be guilty of suicide than run into a project the certain consequences of which were sure to make him a dependent wretch all his days." Fitch's

comparison of embarking on a project without proper encouragement to suicide is similar to his negative comparison of the troubles of working on the steamboat with his "savage captivity." Both symbolize Fitch's economic marginality as an ominous loss of independence and represent that loss of independence in dramatically negative terms.[20]

Although Fitch is affected by the problems of the steamboat project, even his comparisons of these burdens to Indian captivity and suicide stay within pre-industrial parameters of representing threats to the individual self in opposition to independence, respectability, and community. During the summer of 1787, Fitch's self-representation changed again as he encountered the difficulties of building a full-sized steamboat. During the winter of 1786 and spring of 1787, Fitch had secured laws for exclusive rights to the steamboat in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Delaware.[21] Nevertheless, the technical and financial problems of building the boat itself threatened to scuttle the project. The Steamboat Company was reorganized to provide fresh infusions of money for building a larger steam engine, but trials of the new engine revealed that the cylinder had design defects that admitted air and made the piston leaky. Fixing the cylinder made it necessary to take the entire works apart and rebuild it. And when the cylinder was finally repaired, the improved functioning of the cylinder revealed the deficiencies of first the condensers, then the steam valves, and finally the boiler. Having to continually pay out new sums of money for repairs proved discouraging to the members of the Steam boat Company and several became resistant to requests for renewed contributions. As Fitch later wrote in Steamboat History, the absent members "would esteem their money taken from them by me, and would much prefer seeing a common beggar come to their doors than myself."[22]

Without the financial backing of the Steamboat Company however, it was impossible for Fitch to continue the project and Fitch wrote a lengthy letter to breathe life back into the company and save the project. Formulating the letter as a farewell to the city, Fitch frames his arguments for the ultimate success of the steamboat in terms of conformity to God's law. Fitch opens by stating that "[t]he laws of God are positive" and that such laws "are equally positive in every branch of mechanism, and in all sciences, as in other things . . ." The "laws of God" was a

metaphor of objectivity in the sense that these laws are the principles by which the objective world was organized. For Fitch, it was the conformity of the steamboat to the "laws of God," the principles by which the world was organized, that guaranteed the ultimate success of the project. According to Fitch, his own first principle that "two vessels of equal dimensions and weight. . . must go equally fast" if equal forces are applied to them in an equal manner conformed strictly to such divine law. Thus grounding himself, Fitch argued that the key to his ultimate success was that a steamboat could generate the force required to travel up the Mississippi less expensively than the same force generated by men working oars. Where it cost $3000 to "take a boat of 30 tons burthen from New Orleans to the Illinois," Fitch asserted that he could take a boat of sixty tons burden on the same trip for $2,000.[23]

Within this context, Fitch again discusses the benefits and burdens of building steamboats. As was the case in his letters to the Pennsylvania Assembly, Fitch poses his claims for the benefits of the steamboat against the hostility of public opinion. After repeating his claims that the steamboat would make America "the most oppulent empire on earth" and allow American ships to chastize the pirates of Barbary with impunity, Fitch restates public hostility to the steamboat as a failure to recognize divine law. It was "the Laws of God in Machinism" that have permitted "a steam Engine to work on board of a small Boat equally as well as if it had been placed on Land . . . " Not cognizant of the nature of the world as formed by God's hand, the public inevitably accused Fitch of insanity: "let these things be ever so well founded on reason and fact, at this day they cannot be looked upon but as delusive, and the effects of Lunacy."[24]

Just as the metaphor of the laws of God allowed Fitch to give himself the upper hand against the public, this metaphor made it possible for him to offer his investors an opportunity to participate in a human enterprise of the first rank: "when future ages shall rever great Lewis the 16, for promoting the happiness and interest of Mankind, will there be no sons of Columbia to eclips some of those dazzling rays of that Mighty Monarch, and introduce one of the first powers of Nature into our Empire."[25] Fitch also guaranteed the company a profit based on the government's desire to promote expanded settlement in the West. Fitch reminded his readers that

Congress had already promised a large tract of land to James Rumsey of Virginia if he could run his pole-boat fifty miles upstream in one day on the Ohio River. Fitch believed that he had already beaten that standard in his trials and that, as a result, "whoever will patronize my scheme will lay out their money on as sure a ground as the Honor of our Empire . . . "[26]

Having stated his case, Fitch ends the article with a dramatic statement of a desire to abandon the steamboat project and leave Philadelphia. In fact, Fitch wanted neither give up the steamboat project nor leave Philadelphia, but his gesture of farewell is striking for its assimilation of steamboats and pre-industrial practices. Turning from the theme of the profitability of the steamboat project, Fitch asks:

> But why those earnest solicitations, to disturb my nightly repose, and fill me with the most excruciating anxieties; and why not act the part for myself, and retire under the shady Elms on the fair banks of the Ohio, and eat my coarse but sweet bread of industry and content, and when I have done, to have my body laid in the soft, warm, and loomy soil of the Banks, with my name inscribed on a neighboring poplar, that future generations when traversing the Mighty Waters of the West, in the manner I have pointed out, may find my grassy turf, and spread their cupboard on it, and circle round their chearful Knogins of Whiskey, with three times three, till they should suppose a son of misfortune could never occupy the place.[27]

Fitch gives heightened formulations of the benefits and burdens of the steamboat as he poses the rhetorical question of why he should not retire to a more simple life. Where Fitch had been practically burdened by his financial machinations, he now reveals that the trials of steamboat building had been emotionally devastating, causing him to lose sleep and suffer "the most excruciating anxieties." For Fitch, the emotional state of "anxiety" was a kind of external force acting on his mind to cause him high levels of pain. Formulations of emotional states like "care," "troubles," "ills," and "woes" as forces acting to invade, tear apart, oppress, or otherwise attack the mind were common in the popular songs and poetry of pre-industrial Philadelphia. For instance, the sign to the Union Hotel attributes the same malignancy to "woes" and "ills" that Fitch attributes to his anxieties:

Whatever may tend to soothe the soul below
To dry the tear and blunt the shaft of woe,
To drown the ills that discompose the mind--
All those who seek at Warwick's shall find[28]

Like the sign to the Union Hotel and other sources, Fitch poses leisure as the ultimate resolution to his anxieties, but does so in a way that allows him to treat the steamboat's success as a fait accompli. Where Fitch had previously proclaimed future benefits for the steamboat, he now treats those benefits as inevitable with or without his own involvement. Even if Fitch retires to Kentucky and lives out his days in the simple, contented life of pioneer industry, future generations will travel up and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in steamboats (i.e., in the manner I have pointed out). Such travel would be possible because steamboats had lowered transportation costs, facilitated trade, and encouraged settlement, all the accomplishments that Fitch had claimed for the steamboat. It is this future public with whom Fitch views himself as communing when he imagines that travelers "may find my grassy turf, and spread their cupboard on it, and circle round their chearful Knogins of Whiskey with three times three . . ." Where Fitch's current work on the steamboat was creating "excruciating anxieties," the steamboat's inevitable success would make it possible for him to rest easy in his grave and serve as a ghostly host to the festivities of the future public. By substituting a convivial grave for the local tavern, Fitch was able to imagine his ultimate reconciliation as occurring in the same pre-industrial drinking rituals that allowed other artisans to overcome their anxieties.

3. "The Most Distressed Man on Earth"[29]

Fitch's letter to the Steamboat Company had the desired affect of raising more money and Fitch was able to get a steamboat working on the Delaware River during the summer of 1787. Likewise, Fitch was able to make further improvements to the steamboat in 1788 and establish a regular steamboat service on the Delaware in 1790. Nevertheless, by the fall of 1789, Fitch was

no longer representing himself exclusively in pre-industrial terms. Emerging competitors, the financial limits of the steamboat company, and failures in Congress pushed Fitch to such levels of distress and anxiety that he began to develop alternative modes of self-representation focusing on portraying his life as an object that could be used for various kinds of exchange. Fitch continued to use pre-industrial images for several years, emphasizing pre-industrial norms of masculinity as a standard for evaluating his actions. However, by the time Fitch wrote his "Life," "Steamboat History," and will in the summer of 1792, he had by and large given up pre-industrial mode of self-representation.[30]

The claims of James Rumsey were the most important of the conditions stimulating Fitch's anxiety. Rumsey, from western Virginia, was known as the inventor of a pole-boat that moved against the current of rapid streams. However, in September, 1787, as Fitch was successfully demonstrating his steamboat for members of the Federal Convention, a story circulated that Rumsey now claimed to be the inventor of the steamboat. Fitch wrote in his Steamboat History that he gave no credence to the source of the stories, William Askew, but his correspondence in November of that year shows that Fitch took the rumors seriously enough to formulate arguments for his priority over Rumsey. In March 1788. Rumsey ended the suspense by coming to Philadelphia and distributing a pamphlet that announced his own claims that he invented the steamboat in 1784 and that his (Rumsey's) original ideas were stolen by Fitch. Rumsey's claims were plausible enough to put Fitch under a cloud of suspicion. Not only did leading figures like Benjamin Franklin, Levi-Hollingsworth, and William Bingham join the "Rumseian Society" to promote Rumsey's work, but some of Fitch's adherents came to doubt Fitch's honesty, especially Richard Wells, previously one of Fitch's most enthusiastic supporters.[31]

Fitch responded vigorously and effectively. Realizing that Rumsey's claims could destroy support for his (Fitch's) work if unanswered, Fitch walked to Fredericktown (now Frederick), Maryland to collect affidavits supporting Fitch's claim that Rumsey did not work on a steamboat until late 1787. After showing Wells a draft of his response, convincing Wells of his honesty, and obtaining Wells' editorial assistance, Fitch published a pamphlet, The Original Steamboat

Supported, that effectively refuted Rumsey's claims and reestablished Fitch's reputation with the steamboat company. Franklin and the other members of the Rumseian Society decided to continue backing Rumsey and remained active in opposition to Fitch for the remainder of the time that Fitch worked on steamboats, sending Rumsey himself to England and promoting petitions to overturn Fitch's laws in state legislatures. However, Fitch had regained the initiative and began to extend his activity to building a new steamboat for trials on the Delaware and promoting two of his own petitions, one for land in Congress and another for exclusive rights in Rumsey's home state of Virginia.[32]

Nevertheless, Fitch was so disheartened by the controversy that he began to formulate his anguish in ways that were distinct from pre-industrial representation. The first evidence of this change occurs in the altered concept of divinity that comes in a June 3, 1788 letter to a Mr. St. John where Fitch wonders "why Heaven permits such amazing injustice" as was involved in the formation of the Rumseian Society. Fitch was already "imbarrased with all the difficulties that were pofsible for an unfortunate Projector to encounter, even to such a degree that not a day pafsed but I could have wished myself into non-existence." By themselves, these problems--the technical puzzles of steamboat building, the acrimony of collecting money from the steamboat company, the jeers from the public--were an injustice, attacks from what Fitch called the "blind unguided frowns of fortune." Indeed, Fitch experienced these routine difficulties as so exasperating, so anxiety-provoking, that they are enough to stimulate the horrible thought of suicide on a daily basis. However, the fact that all "the great Characters of this Town" were throwing their weight behind Rumsey after Fitch himself had demonstrated the potential of steamboats seemed to be a higher order of injustice, an injustice that could not exist without divine permission. If the Christian deity had previously been the objective guarantee of Fitch's success, the me agency now seemed bent on Fitch's destruction.[33]

At the end of the summer of 1788 an image of a malevolent deity becames the starting point for an alternative form of self-representation when Fitch imagines himself as if he were a plaything of vindictive gods.

> I know Sir when you consider my long series of unremitted difficulties and that my life seems designed by the gods for no other purpose than to give mirth to others without any relief from any quarter like the savage mind rejoicing to see his victim enclosed in faggots . . .[34]

Here, Fitch represents himself as being subject to divine agency in a manner that was distinct from pre-industrial cultural discourse in two ways. First, Fitch was portraying his life as an entity to be acted upon rather than a context to be acted within. In the letter grounding his claims on "God's law," Fitch represented himself as subject to God's law, but he treated God's law as a set of conditions within which humans acted, implying that Fitch himself had the capacity to bring his steamboat plans into conformity with God's law and thus serve the nation and gain fame and wealth for himself. The same is the case in popular culture, where the typical conditions enumerated in popular songs and poetry were duns coming to the door, friends dying horrible deaths, the betrayals of lovers, scolding wives and the cares, troubles, woes and ills resulting from those conditions. Nevertheless, in relation to these conditions, individuals are portrayed as able to act to overcome the sense of care, trouble, and the like through participation in leisure, to "drown cares in the bowl," "take things as they go" and focus on "pleasures ashore." In the above letter however, the gods "design" Fitch's life to "give mirth to others" either in opposition to Fitch's intentions or without reference to his intentions. Rather than portray himself as performing before a collective body and competing with others for collective approval in a pre-industrial way, Fitch portrays himself as the object of the god's own performance, as a way for them to give "mirth to others." Thus, Fitch is comparing his life to a balloon, a deck of cards, or dice as an object to be manipulated in the effort to seek the recognition of others. Rhetorically surrendering his own agency in the face of unbearable anxiety, Fitch treats his life as a "thing" to be acted upon.[35]

Second, this imagery was distinct from pre-industrial culture in posing Fitch's situation as beyond symbolic redemption as well as practical improvement. In portraying the gods as

designing his life for the mirth of others, Fitch indicates that the gods take special pleasure in the escalating character of Fitch's troubles and Fitch's "intolerable tortures of mind." For Fitch, the gods' actions in designing his "difficulties" are comparable to Indians enjoying the torture of their enemies. Such actions by the gods indicate an attitude that is like "the savage mind rejoicing to see its victim enclosed in faggots." In this way, Fitch indirectly views his whole life as comparable to the situation of a "victim enclosed in faggots" with its connotations of unbelievable pain, hopelessness, and humiliation.[36]

In fact, despite Fitch's impressive efforts, the difficulties and disappointments of the steamboat project had deepened during the summer of 1788. Though Fitch reached a speed of over six miles per hour on a twenty-mile trip to Burlington, NJ, the failure to go faster was exasperating to Fitch and his investors. Fitch and the Steamboat Company had decided that the steamboat would be economically viable only at eight miles per hour and the failure to attain eight miles per hour meant that Fitch had devoted three years of "the prime" of his life and his investors had subscribed over L1000 to a project that was still of no benefit to them. Even worse, the likelihood of defeat on the floor had forced Fitch to withdraw his petition to Congress for a large land grant on the Ohio River and ended any hope of having access to resources beyond those of the Steamboat Company. In viewing the situation as intractable by indirectly analogizing himself to being "enclosed in faggots," Fitch was consistent with popular drinking songs and popular poetry, many of which carried an expectation that men could do little to alter persistent debts, injuries, conditions at sea, and other difficult conditions. However, where participation in pre-industrial culture allowed men to represent themselves symbolically as redeemed, Fitch's image of a "victim enclosed in faggots" indicates an inability to imagine himself as symbolically retrieving a represention of himself as independent, valuable, and respected. Fitch still drank with his workmen, visited other workshops, and socialized in taverns, but his participation in these practices evidently did not provide him with either consolation or the hope of c\ting on his life as a whole. This can be seen in an April 1789 letter to William Samuel Johnson where Fitch used an image of torture to characterize his existence, but was able to

represent himself as disposing of his own life. First, Fitch represents his life as the plaything of an external agency, this time Congress.

> . . . but as age and infirmities are advancing fast upon me if my just Rights must be taken from me without being heard by either Branch of the Legislature may I not as well be delivered over to the Rude Savage of my Native Country to sport with and put an end to my wretched Existence to quench their thirst for Blood and serve my Country in my Death as well as my life that my Enemies might be benefited in both [.] [37]

Fitch is writing to Johnson about his petition to Congress to be granted a patent for the steamboat as the original inventor. Rumsey's allies were also petitioning Congress to have Rumsey recognized as steamboat inventor and Fitch believed that if Congress gave Rumsey a patent, they would be taking away the exclusive "rights" to the use of steamboats that Fitch had received from state legislatures. Fitch equated the possibility of losing these "rights" to handing him over to the Indians to be tortured and murdered, an equation predicated on Fitch's identification of his whole person with his status as steamboat inventor. Taking away Fitch's rights as steamboat inventor would be the same as ending Fitch's life and if Congress took away Fitch's rights, they might was well hand him to "Rude Savage to sport with." Thus, Fitch grants Congress some of the power to dispose of his life that he had previously attributed to the Christian god. Fitch also equated Congress' taking his rights as steamboat inventor with taking away his capacity to overcome the difficulties that made his existence so "wretched" and removing Fitch's last hope of improving his situation. Fitch is claiming that if Congress were to strip him of his capacities in this way, he might as well be killed.

Later in the letter, Fitch makes himself the author of his own sacrifice to torment when he states that he "would rather become a willing sacrifice to the Faggot than to wear out the evening of my days in wretched existence to the Eternal Dishonour of the first acts of our Empire." If they gave Rumsey the patent, Congress would not only have removed Fitch's capacity to act, but dishonored the nation as a whole by committing a gross act of injustice as one of its first acts. Congress thus would not only be harming Fitch, it would be undermining the moral status of the

national community itself. If Fitch could not lift himself above the "wretched existence" he now asserted a capacity to willingly choose a painful death in preference to that existence. Attributing such agency to himself was another step out of pre-industrial culture. When Fitch represented the gods as treating his life as an object, he implied the impossibility of identifying himself with pre-industrial values through participation in his work and leisure. In representing himself as an agent disposing of his own life as a way to overcome his sense of torment, Fitch portrayed himself as engaged in a cultural practice that ran counter to the pre-industrial logic of overcoming symbolic threats in the context of cultural activity.

The fact that Fitch was now representing himself in ways that were distinct from pre-industrial culture did not mean, however, that Fitch had abandoned the motifs of pre-industrial culture. As Fitch pushed forward with the steamboat, he developed several strikingly pre-industrial formulations to express his estimation of the value of his accomplishments. Particularly interesting were the assertions and analogies used by Fitch to represent himself as a founder or pioneer of civilization. In a letter to Congress written in the late summer or fall of 1789, Fitch argued that it was the efforts of projectors like himself that had raised humanity out of "Savage Barbarity" and that he, in particular, ought to be rewarded because the steamboat had ended "six thousand years" at the "Toisom Oar." In these images, Fitch portrayed himself as contributing to the welfare of the community in the manner of his early correspondence, but had enlarged his vision of benefitting the community from raising the value of Western lands in the United States to lifting up humanity in general. A year later, Fitch renewed his portrayal of himself as a founder of civilization by asserting that the steamboat was "more useful than any Art that has been introduced into the World this two Centuries past . . . ," and that the steamboat "will probably cause a revolution in the Western World more aftonishing than the Introduction of Arts into Muscova by Peter." In 1790, Fitch experienced his first sustained success with the steamboat, as he got the steamboat to run at eight miles an hour, started a river packet, and received widespread praise for his accomplishments. In viewing the steamboat as a fundamental contribution to civilization, Fitch was portraying himself as realizing his pre-industrial ideals.[38]

Fitch's correspondence also invoked norms of masculinity in a way that was consistent with pre-industrial culture. These representations of masculinity were significant because it was in relation to norms of masculinity that Fitch struggled to represent himself in relation to difficulties that continued to grow despite the real progress in the steamboat project. In April 1789, the same month that he was writing to Johnson about being turned over to the"Rude Savage," Fitch wrote a letter that expressed a strong adherence to pre-industrial norms of masculinity:

> the thets and indignities which you offered me this day demands my . . . attention. The uneaglud grounds on which I stook determined me to act the part I did--But Sir you are undoubtedly frequently in Philad. . . . if you will do me the favour to call onwhen you come to that place I will give you every satisfaction you shall require--I hope you will have too much Honour to avail yourself of your superior strength and youth but be assured I am a man and like a man of Honour I mean to live and die therefore. When you come to Philad. please to favour me with your company . . . . Therefore I trust you will not take it amifs for me to subscribe myself a man of truth who will support what he has said and never think himselfe dishonoured to be called the name of --John Fitch (my emphasis)[39]

This letter was written after incidents between Fitch and some of Rumsey's friends at Virginia and Maryland taverns. In April, 1789, Fitch walked to Shepherdstown, Virginia to gather more affidavits supporting his claims concerning the dating of Rumsey's experiments, but encountered Rumsey's brother-in-law Charles Morrow at a tavern. Knowing that he was among Rumsey's friends and neighbors, Fitch avoided a melee by leaving the tavern after being struck by Morrow. The next night, Fitch dealt with a similar confrontation by buying drinks for everyone in a Sharpsburgh, Maryland tavern. Fitch was mortified by his retreat and wrote the letter to challenge one of his attackers (most likely Morrow) to meet on more equal ground. In pre-industrial discourse, masculinity was defined as: 1. courage, energy, fortitude, and other capacities that are involved in responding to challenges, overcoming opposition, or fulfilling obligations; and 2. authority, plenitude, generosity, credit and other capacities that are attributed to social positions as well as individuals. Fitch evidently believed that it had been impossible for him to

show his "manly fortitude" in the unequal tavern encounters and was now assuring one of his tormentors that he (Fitch) would defend his masculine honor if they met on more equal ground.[40]

Fitch had responded to the problems of steamboat building with an energy that could be linked to "manly fortitude and resolution," inventing new devices for the steam engine, developing fundraising strategems, and walking to Maryland to gather evidence against Rumsey. But Fitch did not translate the masculinity of his behavior into his self-representation. Even before the disputes with Rumsey, Fitch was representing himself in his correspondence more as afflicted with burdens ("the most excruciating anxieties") than as overcoming burdens. After Rumsey's appearance, when he began to equate his situation with being "enclosed in faggots," Fitch was identifying himself as not having the "masculine" capacity to respond to challenges even though he was actually responding effectively to Rumsey and Rumsey's weighty backers. What is distinct about the letter following the incidents in Shepherdstown and Sharpsburgh is that Fitch directly represented himself in terms of masculine ideals of confronting challenges with honor. In assuring his correspondent that he was "a Man" and a "Man of Honor," Fitch was claiming that he routinely lived up to the ideal of responding to challenges with his full force ("and like a man of Honour I mean to live and die). In particular, Fitch would give the correspondent "satisfaction" whether the correspondent wanted a violent contest like those of a fist fight or duel, or a non-violent contest like a law suit. In announcing that he was "a man" in this manner, Fitch was reasserting a pre-industrial identity of confronting and overcoming opposition.[41]

Later in 1789, Fitch formulates his explanation of the current problems of the steamboat project in terms of masculinity. According to Fitch, the origin of his current financial difficulties was in his failure to press the company harder for money, an outcome of being emasculated by gratitude: "when you paid me your Subscriptions, [you] looked upon it more as money given to me . . . which totally unmanned me, and Gratitude forbid my askeing for livies laid till almost too late to save our credit . . ." During the summer of 1789, Fitch had placed an 18" inch cylinder in the steam engine as part of an effort to seek more speed. However, the subsequent experiments with condensers and air pumps proved to be expensive and Fitch had evidently failed to seek

additional funds in a timely manner. This apparent negligence put Fitch into debt and left him open to threats, insults, and imputations against his character. "Thus being obliged to act beneath the dignity of a man, and Consequently beneath the dignity of myself, I have laid myself liable to indignities from every quarter . . ." As Fitch states later in the letter, he is treated "more like a slave than a freeman." Here, Fitch manifests his attachment to pre-industrial culture by invoking norms of masculinity even though he finds his conduct lacking according to those norms.[42]

A year later, Fitch still invoked a standard of masculinity, but in this case the reference to masculinity masks a shift out of a pre-industrial discourse.

> Why sir to tell you the Truth these six weeks past i am nothing better than an Old woman and a mear Cypher when money could raise me above the dignity of a Nobleman and effect greater things than ever Ceasar or Alaxander did[.] My deprefsed spirits is certainly not for the want of an inclination to serve you for I know that I could with freedom this evening sacrifise my life to gratify your wishes[.]"[43]

The shift from a pre-industrial discourse to an alternative discourse occurs in the explanation of the first sentence by the second sentence. When Fitch states in the first sentence of this letter to Richard Stockton and the Steamboat Company that he has been "nothing better than an old woman and a mear Cypher" for six weeks, he is expressing his relative inactivity and evaluating that inactivity as a deficiency in masculinity. If "manly fortitude" involved confronting and overcoming obstacles to meet one's obligations, failure to face up to such obstacles could be viewed as "femininity." Fitch emphasizes this point by also calling himself a "mear Cypher," someone who does not act on his own initiative. On the other hand, if Fitch had money, he would be more potent, more manly, than the greatest men in history. In the second sentence however, Fitch's explanation of his failure to act indicates a shift away from pre-industrial standards. Fitch begins by citing his "depressed spirits" in a way that signified that these "depressed spirits" were known to his audience and were the obvious explanation for Fitch's lack of activity rather than a "lack of inclination" to serve Stockton and the steamboat company. It is not that Fitch does not

want to do his duty to the steamboat company, it is that his "depressed spirits" prevent him from doing so. It is evident that Fitch attributes his depressed spirits to a lack of money and all the problems that the shortage of money entailed for Fitch, especially the traumas of facing duns from his jouneymen, suppliers, and landlords. In previous years, Fitch had referred to his "excruciating anxieties" and analogized his life to being enclosed in faggots. Perhaps his "depressed spirits" resulted from his unwillingness to grapple yet again with a reality that he represented and experienced in such painful terms.

However, if Fitch viewed himself as unable to work on the steamboat project, he does portray himself as capable of acting "with freedom" to sacrifice his life to gratify Stockton's wishes. Fitch mentions the sacrifice of his life as evidence of a desire to work on the steamboat, but the freedom with which he would sacrifice his life is also the freedom that Fitch no longer attributes to himself in relation to the steamboat. Where Fitch could readily arrange and execute his own death to satisfy Stockton, Fitch could not bring himself to go about his work on the steamboat out of gratitude to Stockton or any other motive. In his own mind, Fitch has an inner capacity to sacrifice his life for Stockton's sake that he no longer possesses in relation to the steamboat project. Just as Fitch's representation of his "wretched existence" as analogous to being consumed by flames prevents him from acting on the steamboat, such a representation of Fitch's life would provide a kind of "practical orientation" toward self-sacrifice, whether that self-sacrifice would be suicide, letting himself be given to torture, or some other kind of self-chosen death. Although Fitch invokes a pre-industrial standard of masculinity but represents the world in such a way that he can not act according to that standard. Moreover, the action that Fitch does imagine himself as taking, sacrificing himself, implies a representation that is outside pre-industrial culture.

Ironically, Fitch wrote these sentiments after what was by far the best year for the steamboat project. Early in 1990, Fitch finally solved the recurring condenser problems by developing a pipe condenser, an improvement which made it possible to run the steamboat at eight miles an hour and start a regular passenger service. For a brief time, the success of the

steamboat project seemed assured and praise came in from many quarters. Governor Mifflin and the Council of Pennsylvania privately subscribed a set of pennants for the steamboat. Newspapers and magazines wrote laudatory articles with the New York Magazine giving assurances that Fitch would certainly make his fortune. Some of the voyages even seemed to have received an enthusiastic popular reaction. Nevertheless, disaster soon followed. The Steamboat Company authorized work on a new boat, The Perseverence, without securing funds from the members in advance and Fitch found himself once again begging money from the members, falling behind on his rent, and failing to pay his journeymen. Fitch's political initiatives were also stymied. Fitch was disappointed when representatives from Western Pennsylvania rejected a proposal to build steamboats at Pittsburgh. Fitch was even more disappointed when Congress refused to consider his application for a patent without referral to the Patent Commissioners and the Patent Commissioners themselves delayed their hearings on the competing claims of Fitch, Rumsey, and John Cox until the spring.[44]

4. Moneyed Limbs and the Return of the Convivial Grave

The summer of 1790 was the high-water mark of Fitch's steamboat project. In April 1791, the Patent Commissioners, headed by Rumsey supporter Thomas Jefferson, granted Fitch and Rumsey equal patents in the steamboat, an event from which the steamboat project never fully recovered. Fitch was prevailed upon to renew his efforts, but the work was now controlled by the penny-pinching Richard Stockton who refused to advance Fitch adequate money and insisted on installing a wooden rather than a metal case to the boiler, a strategy that proved disastrous. Fitch was only fitfully active, writing in April that he would "willingly Struggle one year Longer but it seems that the Laws of Nature and my Country seems to [forbid] it and demands one year of rest." Although working steadily after September, Fitch was unable to fix the enormous leaks that had resulted from Stockton's wooden case experiment and fell into a pattern of alternating mild

efforts on the steamboat, proposals to build steamboats in Kentucky or France, and work on his autobiographical manuscripts, Life and Steamboat History.[45]

While writing the Life and Steamboat History, Fitch changed from represented himself as exchanging his life for an end to the steamboat project to actively planning suicide. In July 1792, Fitch worked to complete the manuscripts and his will and deposit them with the Library Company of Philadelphia as part of a plan to commit suicide. On July 30, Fitch refers to his intended suicide in a letter to Library Company concerning a note to Thomas Jefferson to be included with his manuscripts: "Some few days before my death, I wrote the enclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Jefferson; but being persuaded from it by some of my Friends, who did not know in what manner I designed to die (emphasis in text). In many ways, the Life and Steamboat History can both be interpreted as evidence of Fitch's growing distance from pre-industrial culture as he prepared to end his life. Although the manuscripts are too long to fully analyze in the context of this paper, it is possible to identify three modes of separation from pre-industrial culture: 1. Fitch's critical self-reflections on pre-industrial values; 2. his refusal to view himself in terms of pre-industrial accomplishment; and 3. his mutually-reinforcing invocations of a cruel fate and his own willingness to submit to torture, execution, or dismemberment.[46]

First, Fitch ridicules his attachment to pre-industrial values of serving both friends and the common good. In the Steamboat History, for example, Fitch characterizes his early efforts to promote the steamboat as a comedy of self-defeating misjudgments caused by his attachment to the national interest. Fitch reports that he was so "intoxicated" with the steamboat that he believed it was impossible for Congress to "think otherwise than I did, and that they would at once raise money enough to effect it, for the sake of raiseing the Value of their Western Teretory." When the petition was rejected, Fitch could not easily get over his anger at the "ignorant boys" in Congress, but now he viewed the intensity of both his committment to serving the country and his concern with "honours and immoluments" as unreasonable. Even more absurdly, Fitch's ideas of serving the United States and mankind led him to reject an offer of assistance from the Spanish ambassador. "The strange Ideas I had at that time of serving my

Country . . . and to do it at the displeasure of the whole Spanish Nation is one of the most impolitic Strokes that a Blockhead could be guilty of." Here, Fitch not only raises questions concerning his own zealotry, but calls into doubt the good of benefitting one's nation, doing one's duty, or serving the common good or other pre-industrial formulations of committment to the collective. Acting for the benefit of the collective or viewing oneself in terms of duties and obligations to the collective was for "blockheads." Fitch completes his self-burlesque by emphasizing the obvious foolhardiness of his "strange ideas of "serving my country" by concluding that "the Trouble that I have taken to prove him a Statesman and myself a Blockhead, is totally unnecessary, as neither of them can be doubted."[47]

If Fitch portrayed his overheated desire to serve his country as absurdly self-defeating in the Steamboat History, he represented his committment to helping Harry Voight and Mary Krafft avoid the ruin of their reputations in the Life as even more irrational. Although both Voight and Krafft were the parents of several children by other spouses, they had a long affair which resulted in the births of children in 1789 and 1791. Fitch went to "great lengths" to save their reputations, offering to marry Krafft when she first became pregnant, assisting in the birth of the first child, and finally allowing Krafft to claim him (Fitch) as the father of the second child. Fitch begins his narration of the episode by treating his attempts to help his friends as a crime, claiming that he "ought almost to suffer by the common Executioner . . . and to tell you that I ought to suffer for the best of acts may allarm you more." When Fitch responded to the crisis of the first pregnancy by arranging for a midwife and assisting in the birth, he emphasized that he acted "beyond the limits of prudence" in arranging for the midwife and "degraded the man" by functioning as a nurse. Likewise, when Fitch came under suspicion of murder when the baby died a year later, he emphasized he "highly deserve[d] to suffer for the crime of assisting in the birth in the first place because it was his duty to not only "keep clear of a fault but also the suspicion of one." Thus, Fitch now believed that the pre-industrial virtue of steadfastly serving friends was actually a fault for which he could be rightly punished. At the end of his narration of his involvement with Voight and Krafft, Fitch ridicules himself again for having "far Exceeded Quixot in releaving Destressed

Ladies" and warning his audience "how injuditious it is to do anything on account of Friendship."[48]

The fact that Fitch took a critical distance from pre-industrial values of service to community and friends is evidence of a failure to identify himself with those values. Fitch also fails to make claims for the steamboat project in terms of those virtues. In contrast to his correspondence, Fitch claims that the steamboat will contribute to America or the world once in the Steamboat History, in his report of the successful trip undertaken by him and Voight in 1790. There he proudly repeats his assertions that the steamboat would "make our Western territory four times as valuable as otherwise it would be and that the steamboat was "one of the Greatest and most useful arts that was ever introduced into the World." However, that is the only assertion concerning either the value of the steamboat or his own worth as steamboat inventor in more than five hundred pages of manuscript. In a sharp departure from his correspondence, Fitch's autobiographical writings do not seek to represent Fitch's contribution as steamboat inventor, compare Fitch to world-historical figures like Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Peter the Great or estimate the steamboat's importance in comparison to other inventions. Fitch did make such allusions in relation to his deist society (The Society of Deist Natural Philosophers), claiming that deism could displace Christianity and that he (Fitch) could have done "more than ever Jesus Christ or George Fox did" if his appearance and speech were more appealing. But instead of identifying himself with the individual accomplishment, reputation, and service to mankind represented by these figures, Fitch places his hopes for deism on the Rev. Nathaniel Irwin, a Philadelphia-area minister. Having given up the pre-industrial world of accomplishment, Fitch urges Irwin to take up the work of deism and assures the minister that deism is "now the greatest opening for a man of Tallents equal to yours to make himself the Greatest which ever lived."[49]

The final evidence of Fitch's withdrawal from pre-industrial culture is the combination of images of a cruel fate and images of his own execution, torture, or dismemberment in response to that fate. Fitch piles up images of a difficult fate at key moments of the Life. In describing his

birth, Fitch expands on how his father "had to go about four miles for the mid-wife and to worry thro' the snowbanks on his return perhaps with nearly the same difficulties that I have gone thro' life . . ." An example of an unjust beating at the hands of his older brother seemed to "forbode the fiture rewards that I was to receive for my labours thro' life." Likewise, an escape from serious injury as a youth meant that "heaven had designed me for some cruel fate whose only pleasure should be to sport and tyrinize with me as if he had been educated amongst savages for thousands of years for the very purpose . . ." The same is the case when Fitch was saved from execution during his Revolutionary War Indian captivity: "[b]ut Capt. Crow . . . stopped the fatal Blow that the fates might be fully satisfied and have no reason to complain that they had not ever an individual delivered up to them to sport with them as they pleased." Thus, Fitch characterized several of the turns in his early life in terms of being delivered for the purpose of being teased and tormented by divine forces. Fitch was saved from "the savage blow" of one Indian so that his whole life could be a series of savage blows delivered by divinities (heaven, fates) whose enjoyment of Fitch's torment was analogous to that of the most cultivated savagery. It is within this "objective" context that Fitch's previously-mentioned abandonment of pre-industrial values ultimately has resonance. If Fitch's life is best understood as an endless series of torments, efforts to live a cohesive life ordered by virtues learned during childhood would inevitably be ridiculous. That loyalty to his friends would ultimately bring Fitch under a cloud of suspicion for their misdeeds would only be logical if heaven were toying with him. Likewise, Fitch's attempt to seek fame, acquire wealth, and benefit mankind through the steamboat would only result in his own ruin.[50]

Seeking to identify himself with pre-industrial values was futile for Fitch because of the cruelty of his life. However, as was the case in the correspondence, Fitch found that he could exercise an agency in his life by giving himself the status of "heaven" or "fate" and "sporting" with his life for his own purposes. Given that Fitch completed the Life and Steamboat History as part of a plan to commit suicide, these texts as a whole should be viewed as part of an effort by Fitch to manipulate his life by ending that life. This was his "dying speech." In the Steamboat History,

Fitch also viewed acting on his life as a whole as a logical response to the worst trials of the steamboat project and by far the worst of these trials was the continual necessity of raising money. In characterizing his fundraising efforts in 1787, Fitch portrays asking his friends for money as more distressing than either leaving his family, his Indian captivity, or his bouts with the "gravil" and rheumatism, though these illnesses were "quite sufficient to pacify Heaven for all the crimes that ever I committed." Instead of making such demands, Fitch would rather have undergone repeated amputation. "Could money have been extracted from my Limbs, amputations would have often taken place, provided the disjointed part could have been readily joined, rather than to make the demands which I have." Unable to imagine himself now as overcoming the need for financial dependence and humiliation that he would have experienced as a threat to his human integrity, Fitch imagines himself as choosing to sacrifice his bodily integrity as an alternative, i. e. choosing repeated amputation. Fitch invokes the same kind of self-mutilation as a response to his forced withdrawal of his pettion for a land grant to Congress in 1788. "When I received information of that . . . could I have recalled my life back for four years, I would gladly have offered my neck to the common executioner."[51]

What ends did Fitch seek to obtain through either the suicidal gestures of repeated amputations and offering his neck to the common executioner or his overall plan to commit suicide? Some evidence is given in the will that he drew up in July 1792. The focal point of the document is a short song that Fitch seemed to have written himself.

The Song of the Brown Jug

With my jug in one hand and my pipe in the other
I'll drink to my neighbor and friend
All my cares in a whiff of Tobacco I'll smother
My life I know shortly must End
While Ceres most kindly refills my Brown Jug with Brown Ale
I will make myself mellow
In my old Vicar Chair I'll set myself snuf
Like a jolly and true-hearted fellow

I'll ne'er trouble myself with the Cares of my Nation

I've enough of My own for to mind
All we see in this World is but grief and vexation
To Death I am Shortly Resigned
So we'll laugh Drink and Smoke and leave nothing to Care
And Drop lie a Pair (Pear) Ripe and Mellow
When Cold in my Coffin I'll leave them to Say
He's gone what a True-hearted Fellow[52]

In "The Song of the Brown Jug," Fitch poses the acceptance of death as the fundamental condition for the reestablishment of a psychological integrity that had been disrupted by the distresses of the steamboat project. When Fitch writes that "my life I know Shortly must end" and "to Death I am Shortly Resigned," he indicates that he is aware of imminent death, but instead his death as a horrible but still preferable alternative to the steamboat project, Fitch now conceives death as having a positive role in combatting care. Unlike pre-industrial drinking songs, Fitch does not view leisure as a process through which care can be violently overwhelmed. Fitch has no sense that "if any care or pain remains/ why drown it in the bowl." Rather, it is because death offers the prospect of definitively ending his cares that Fitch can feel the sense of comfort and wholeness expressed when he states that "while Ceres most kindly refills my Brown Jug with Brown Ale/ I will make myself mellow/ In my old vicar Chair I'll set myself snug/ Like a jolly and true-hearted fellow."[53]

Fitch's portrayal of his death as a condition for overcoming care represents another fundamental shift out of pre-industrial culture on his part. Where Fitch had previously stepped out of pre-industrial culture by representing the conditions of his life as beyond practical or symbolic redemption and representing himself as choosing torture and torment over facing his particular difficulties, he now portrays himself as identifying himself with his own death before entering into drinking, smoking, and laughing with his friends. Instead of portraying death as an external threat, Fitch now portrays himself as "practically dead" in the sense that his awareness of himself as about to die is guiding his current actions. Indeed, Fitch also makes his death into the premise of his future interactions, mandating that funds be devoted to "the person who shall go to my Grave on said Day at 4 o'clock in the afternoon . . . and sing the Song of the Brown jug . . . which shall be

shared by him in equal proportions to all present either in Liquor or money . . ." By killing himself, Fitch is hoping to create a "convivial grave" where honor is done to his name and memory. There is a way in which the convivial grave that Fitch projects in his will has the features of heavy drinking, singing, and praise that were typical of pre-industrial culture. However, it is important to remember that the "pre-identification" with death that anchors Fitch's image of the convivial grave takes place outside the processes of recognition that are typical of pre-industrial culture.[54] The processes by which Fitch's thoughts turned from the representation of death as a horrible choice toward embracing his death as a condition for overcoming care are obscure. Nonetheless, Fitch was engaged in a mode of self-identification that was outside pre-industrial culture.

CONCLUSION

It should be emphasized that Fitch did not commit suicide during the summer of 1792. Perhaps not yet brave enough to carry out such intentions, Fitch ultimately drifted to Bardstown, Kentucky in 1795 or 1796 where he first attempted to drink himself to death and finally killed himself by taking an overdose of opium. Fitch's portrayal of the conditions of his life as the sick joke of vindictive gods, his images of himself as choosing torture and torment over his existence, and his representation of his identification with death all involve both a failure to delineate himself within the symbolism of pre-industrial culture and a set of experiments in alternative modes of self-representation. In Fitch's case, an initial cultural transformation was triggered by his inability to sustain an identification with pre-industrial culture in the context of managing a highly speculative business enterprise. Fitch's cultural transformation did not itself lead to the development of an industrial culture, but provides evidence that the eventual transition to industrial culture may have been pushed by the failure of pre-industrial culture within the context of the rapidly expanding post-revolutionary and early nineteenth century economy. Perhaps the actions of the workingmen's societies, burlesque parade clubs, rioting firemen, and race rioters of the period were

the "dying speeches" of pre-industrial culture as a whole in the same way that Fitch's Life and Steamboat History were the dying speeches of pre-industrial culture within Fitch.[55]

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[1]Fitch, Steamboat History in The Autobiography of John Fitch, ed. by Frank D. Prager, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976, 172, my emphasis.

[2]Thompson Westcott, Life of John Fitch, The Inventor of the Steamboat, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1878, 205, my emphasis.

[3]Fitch to William Samuel Johnson, April 1789, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress, my emphasis.

[4]for analyses of pre-industrial culture as "processes of recognition," see Ric Northrup (Caric), "Decomposition and Reconstitution: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis of Philadelphia Artisan Culture, 1785-1820," Ph.d. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1989, 172-173, 183-199; Ric Northrup (Caric), "Blustering Brags, Dueling Inventors, and Corn-Square Geniuses: Processes of Recognition Among Philadelphia Artisans, 1787-1825," paper delivered to the Ohio Valley History Association, September 15, 1993, 5-17; Ric Northrup Caric, "Independence, Honor, Trouble, and Care: Embodied Meanings Among Philadelphia Artisans, 1785-1825," delivered to the Pennsylvania History Association, Oct. 15, 1994, forthcoming in Pennsylvania History, April 1996, 13-20; for tavern debate, see an incident between a butcher and a young man from the country as reported in The Tickler, Sept. 28, 1808; for drinking at the workplace, see George Escol Sellers, see "Recollections of Nathan Sellers," in George Escol Sellers "Memoirs," American Philosophical Society, 21, Rollo G. Silver, The American Printer, (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1967, The temperance Advocate and Literary Repository, May 20, 1843, 173, Cynthia Shelton, "Labor and Capital in Early Manufacturing: The Failure of John Nicholson's Manufacturing Complex,. 1794-1797," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 1982, and T. W. Dyott, "An exposition of the System of Moral and Mental labor Established at the Glass Factory of Dyottville in the County of Philadelphia," Philadelphia: 1833, 9; for singing during workbreaks, see Scharf and Westcott, The History of Philadelphia, 2, 976: for religious debate in the workshop, see Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings, ed. Jesse Lemisch, New York: Signet, 1961, 49; for the obligation to treat other workmen, see Eugene S. Ferguson, Engineering Reminiscences, Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian, 1965, 18; for an example of a contests at a workshop, see Ferguson Engineering Reminiscences, 16-18.

[5]For militia companies, see Susan G. Davis, Parades and Power, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, 49-65; for the tavern socializing of militia companies, see The Tickler, Aug. 5, 1808; for debating society, see "Memoir of Jonathon Roberts," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 57; for an analysis of fire companies as "processes of recognition," see Ric Northrup (Caric), "Decomposition and Reconstitution: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis of Philadelphia Artisan Culture, 1785-1825," 200-204; for fines, see the roll book of the Diligent Fire Company, 1812-1820, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania; for rules governing authority at fires, see Frank H. Schell, "Old Volunteer Fire

Laddies, The Famous, Fast, Faithful, Fistic Fire Fighters of Bygone Days," in Frank H. Schell Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 4, 24.

[6]For ills, see John Scharf and Thompson Westcott, A History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884, Philadelphia: L. Ewarts, 1884, 989; for troubles, see "Spanking Jack," in "Songs, 1805," The Library Company of Philadelphia; for cares, see "An Anacreotic," The Port-folio, Feb. 23, 1806; for representations of threats in reports of pre-industrial cultural encounters, see the incident between a butcher and a young man in The Tickler, Sept. 28, 1808 and the inventing contest between Samuel Perkins and Commodore Murray in Eugene S. Ferguson, Engineering Reminiscences, 18-20; for cock-fighting, see The Tickler, April 13, 1808; for other forms of animal baiting, see Scharf and Westcott, A History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884, 985-991.

[7]John Fitch, Life, in The Autobiography of John Fitch, edited by Frank D. Prager, 29; Susan G. Davis, "Making Night Hideous: Christmas Revelry and Public Order in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia," American Quarterly, 34, 1982, 187.

[8]For Fitch's "finding" his journeymen in liquor, see an undated statement of wages drawn up for the Steamboat Company, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress; for boarding at Mary Krafft's tavern, see John Fitch to the Steamboat Company, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress, Dec. 24, 1789; for work breaks in pre-industrial work shops, see Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, 256 "frequently getting mildly glad in Liquor" with visitors to the docks, see Fitch, Life, the The Autobiography of John Fitch, 120-121; . For direct evidence concerning Fitch's participation in workplace processes of recognition late in 1792 after Fitch temporarily had given up work on the steamboat.

> When a dispute arose between Mr. Fitch and Mr.Voight respecting the different cur[v]e that ye pad[d]les of ye Horse Boate made to yee curve that the pad[d]les of the steam Boate[.]--Mr. Fitch theirfore lade a wager with Mr. Voight that ye pad[d]les of ye steem boate did not form sutch a curve as Mr. Voight had then discribed[.] Mr. Fitch therefore made a mod[el] that described ye Curve that ye preasent pad[d]les of ye Steem boate makes, witch was not like the Curve that Mr. Voight had represented. [T]heirfore [Fitch] claimed the Bet[.] Both party's being satisfyed in their experiments[.] [T]hen I whent in to Col. W[e]lls with them and Mr. Fitch said he should only claim a Mug or two of Beear with Mr. Voight[.] Cheerfully paced for[.] Anthing further I know not[.]

Although roughly reported, this incident is a good example of the working of informal pre-industrial cultural activities and Fitch's participation in those activities. What was at stake in this wager was not only Fitch or Voight's correctness concerning the curve of the paddles on the steamboat, but Fitch's mechanical skill. For several years, first Fitch's enemies and then Voight himself had claimed that Voight was the mechanical genius behind the achievements of the steamboat project rather than Fitch. At this point, Fitch and Voight were on friendly terms, but in challenging Voight, Fitch claimed that he was Voight's equal or superior in mechanical judgment and was willing to risk being judged by Col. Wells, spectators in Wells' office, and the anonymous correspondent. If Fitch had won the bet, he would have received the praise of those who viewed his model of the oar and an acknowledgement of

his victory by Voight in the payment of the bet. In this sense, Fitch was seeking recognition through competitive performance before a group. (undated, anonymous affidavit in Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress. The incident to which the affidavit refers would have occurred in the fall of 1992, the period when Fitch was pre-occupied with the horse-boat.

[9]Fitch, Steamboat History, in The Autobiography of John Fitch, edited by Frank D. Prager, 145, 147-148, 150-151,154-157.

[10]John Fitch to the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, Jan. 5, 1786. The brackets indicate places where Fitch's spelling or capitalization has been changed to conform to current usage.

[11]All quotes are from Fitch to Maryland Assembly, Jan. 5, 1786.

[12]Fitch to the Committee of Congress, Aug. 30, 1785; Fitch to the Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Aug. 1, 1785; Fitch to the Ambassador from Spain, New York, Sept. 2, 1785.

[13]Thompson Westcott, The Life of John Fitch, the Inventor of the Steamboat, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1878, 152-157, 158-160.

[14]Fitch to Mifflin, Sept. 21, 1786.

[15]Fitch to Mifflin, Sept. 21, 1786.

[16]Fitch to the Pennsylvania Assembly, 1786. The Library of Congress dates this letter as March, 1786 because the letter is a response to one of Arthur Donaldson's petitions. This dating, however, is mistaken. The letter contains references to the system of cranks and paddles and consequently must have been written after the skiff experiments of July 1786; Fitch to Pennsylvania Assembly, 1786. The Library of Congress dates this petition as March 23, 1786, but this dating is also mistaken because of the references to the system of cranks and paddles.

[17]Fitch to Mifflin, Sept. 21, 1786.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Fitch to the Committee of the Assembly, September, 1786.

[20]Fitch to the Committee of the Assembly, September, 1786.

[21]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 150-151,173, 175-176.

[22]John Fitch, Steamboat History in John Fitch, The Autobiography of John Fitch, edited by Frank D. Prager, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976, 171-175.

[23]Westcott, 186-188.

[24]Westcott, 189.

[25]Westcott, 188-189.

[26]Thompson Westcott, Life of John Fitch, the Inventor of the Steamboat, 190.

[27]Ibid

[28]Schar and Westcott, A History of Philadelphia, 989.

[29]Fitch to Richard Stockton, Jan. 16, 1789.

[30]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 191-194, 255-257,281-293.

[31]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 194, 204, 261-262; Fitch to Dr. William Samuel Johnson, Sept. 14, 1787; Fitch to Dr. William Samuel Johnson, Nov. 21, 1787; Fitch to Dr. William Samuel Johnson, Nov. 24, 1787.

[32]Westcott, Life of John Fitch,194-198, 203-205, 218-227, 373-374.

[33]Fitch to St. John, New York, June 3, 1788, for Fitch's reference to "fortune" as an objective force, see Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 191;Fitch to James Madison, Feb. 10, 1788..

[34]Fitch to St. John, Oct. 25, 1789.

[35]For images of duns coming to the door, see The Tickler, Dec. 13, 1809, for scolding wives, see "Thimble's Wife" in various song collections; for friends dying horrible deaths, see "Spanking Jack" in Songs, 1805, a collection of songs at the Library Company of Philadelphia; for drowning cares in the bowl, see Robert Waln jr., The Hermit in America on a Visit to Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 1819, 204; for taking things as they go, see "A Song" in the tavern book of Robert and Lydia Moulder, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[36]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 203-205, 255-256. Fitch refers to himself as regularly attending a tavern in Life, 124 and as drinking at the worksite in Life, 121. The merchant Thomas Cope describes Fitch as visiting the workshops of other masters in Westcott, 339.

[37]Fitch to William Samuel Johnson, April, 1789.

[38]Fitch to Committee in Congress, listed by the Library of Congress as written in 1789; Fitch to Robert Morris, Sept. 20, 1790 (unmailed).

[39]Fitch (Sharpsburgh) to - - -, April 26, 1789. Fitch's letter does not indicate to whom it is addressed. However, the available evidence points to Charles Morrow, the brother-in-law of James Rumsey. On April 26, Fitch, who was staying in Sharpsburgh while collecting affidavits to support his claims against Rumsey, had had a confrontation with Morrow at a tavern in which Morrow jammed his hand into Fitch's face. Friends of Morrow were also at the tavern, but Morrow is most likely the only man in that company whom Fitch would have known to have business in Philadelphia.

[40]Fitch, Steamboat History, 186 for an excellent analysis of representations of threats to masculinity among Philadelphia merchants", see Toby L. Ditz, "Shipwrecked; or Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," Journal of American History, June 1994, 51-76.

[41]For "manly fortitude and resolution," see Fitch to General Gibson (suppressed), 1790; Fitch (Sharpsburgh) to ------, April, 1789.

[42]Fitch to the Directors of the Steamboat Company, Dec. 17, 1789; Fitch, Steamboat History, 187.

[43]Fitch to Richard Stockton, undated 1790. Internal evidence indicates that the letter was written between the time that the steamboat stopped running for the year and Christmas.

[44]Fitch, Steamboat History, 191-196; 282, 288-289, 294-296, 298-301.

[45]Fitch, Steamboat History, 197-199, A. Brodeau to William Thornton, Dec. 19, 1791; Fitch to the Steamboat Company, April 26, 1791; Richard Stockton to William Thornton, Sept. 6, 1791; for the dates of writing the Life, see Fitch, Life, 135 and Fitch, Steamboat History, 143.

[46]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 342.

[47]Fitch, Steamboat History, 145, 148, 151-153.

[48]Fitch, Life, 124, 126, 136-137.

[49]Fitch, Steamboat History, 193; Life, 120-121, 130.

[50]Fitch, Life, 21, 23, 30, 70,

[51]Fitch, Steamboat History, 157, 171-172; Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 205.

[52]Fitch, "Will," July 13, 1792, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress.

[53]This account partially draws on the analysis of "The Song of the Brown Jug" in Ric Northrup Caric, "Independence, Honor, Trouble, and Care: Embodied Meanings Among Philadelphia Artisans, 1785-1825," forthcoming in Pennsylvania History, 25-26.

[54]Fitch, "Will," July 13, 1792.

[55]Westcott, Life of John Fitch, 364-370